

Introduction

King County Comprehensive Plan 2008

2008 King County Comprehensive Plan Update The Public Review Draft October 2007

Background

The King County Comprehensive plan guides growth and development in the unincorporated areas of King County and sets county policy on major issues like annexations, transportation, and environmental protection.

Small routine or technical changes can be made to the plan once each year, but bigger changes, including those that affect policy and the Urban Growth Area (UGA), can be made only once every four years. This is the plan's third major update.

The foundation for the changes in 2008 is the Scope of Work Motion adopted by the King County Council on April 9, 2007.

The Public Review Draft

Part I of this document shows proposed changes to the policies and text of the Comprehensive Plan. The changes are depicted in 'legislative format' with new language underlined and deleted language (~~crossed out~~).

Part II includes the land use and zoning studies undertaken as part of this process. Recommendations and maps depicting the study area follow the analysis for each study.

Part III includes summaries of changes to the King County Code necessary to implement the proposed policy changes. The full text of the code sections in legislative format will be available at the public meetings and on the Comprehensive Plan website.

What happens next:

- County planners are using the public input they have collected as they prepare a draft update to the King County Comprehensive Plan. The draft update will be available in libraries and on our web site for public review in early October 2007.
- County staff will collect citizen comments on the draft update at public meetings that will be held in Covington, White Center, Snoqualmie, and Redmond, and on Vashon Island, in October 2007.
- Comments on the draft update will be accepted until December 28, 2007.
- King County Executive Ron Sims will submit a final Recommended 2008 Update to the King County Council on March 1, 2008.
- The Council will review the update, and is expected to adopt it in late 2008.

More information about the King County Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 update are available on the King County Web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/2008/>

Learn more and tell us what you think

Learn about the draft update and share your comments at one of these upcoming public meetings:

Saturday, October 6
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Lake Washington School District Administration Building
Board Room
16250 NE 74th Street, Redmond

Thursday, October 11
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Cascade View Elementary School
34816 SE Ridge Street, Snoqualmie

Monday, October 15
7:30 to 9 p.m.
Vashon-Maury Island UAC Meeting
Courthouse Square
19021 Vashon Highway SW, Vashon

Tuesday, October 16
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Kentridge High School
12430 SE 208th Street, Kent

Thursday, October 18
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
White Center Heights Elementary
10015 Sixth Avenue SW, Seattle

Comment Deadline

Please submit all comments to King County by **Friday, December 28, 2007.**

Contact Us

Tell us what you think about the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Please direct questions and comments to:

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A. About King County

King County has some of the most beautiful scenery in the country, some of the most productive farmlands, and one of the most vibrant economies. The King County Comprehensive Plan ((2004)) establishes a vision that preserves this incredible diversity while continuing to acknowledge that citizens want options as to where they live, work and play. The plan guides growth and development throughout the unincorporated areas of the county and establishes King County's position on major issues such as annexations, regional water supply and environmental protection.

King County Geography

King County, covering 2,130 square miles, is the size of the state of Delaware, but much more geographically diverse. It extends from Puget Sound in the west to 8,000-foot Mt. Daniel at the Cascade crest to the east. King County's various landforms include saltwater coastline, river floodplains, plateaus, slopes and mountains, punctuated with lakes and salmon streams. Lake Washington, covering 35 square miles, and Lake Sammamish with 8 square miles are the two largest bodies of fresh water. Vashon-Maury Island in Puget Sound and Mercer Island in Lake Washington provide different island environments.

The north-south trending shapes of the lakes and hills make east-west travel more difficult than north-south travel. Four major river basins with salmon-bearing streams are separated by step-sided plateaus whose slopes are subject to landslides and erosion.

King County Jurisdictions

As of ((2004)) 2007, there are 39 cities ranging in size from Seattle with 572,000 people to Skykomish and Beaux Arts with less than 350 each. Since December 1994, five new cities have incorporated, shifting 120,000 people into city limits. King County's 39 cities cover 383 square miles, or 18% of the county's total land area. The incorporated population has increased by a total of 327,000 since 1994, primarily due to new cities and large annexations as well as growth within existing boundaries.

Unincorporated King County, the territory outside any city, now has about 352,000 people or 20% of the county's population, on 82% of its land area. The unincorporated population has decreased by 148,000 since the 1994 Comprehensive Plan was initially adopted, chiefly through the incorporation of new cities.

King County Demographics

~~(In 2004, with more than 1,779,000 people, King County is the largest county in Washington State and the 13th largest in the nation. As a populous large county with a major central city, King County constitutes the majority of the "Seattle-Bellevue-Everett" metropolitan area of nearly 2.5 million persons. King County exhibits growing diversity: 73% of the population is non-Hispanic white, 11% Asian or Pacific Islander, 5% African-American, 1% Native American and ((4%))5.5% Latino (2000 census).~~

~~King County's population has grown by 11% since 1994, a modest rate compared with Sunbelt metro areas and nearby Puget Sound counties. However, given the large population already here, the growth numbers are significant. The population increase since 1994 equals the total existing population of the cities of Bellevue and Renton. King County is forecasted to grow by an additional 270,000 persons (15%) to about 2,049,000 by 2022.~~

~~The number of housing units in King County is growing at about the same rate as its population. Now estimated at 775,000 houses, apartment and condominium units and mobile homes, housing has increased by 83,000 units (12%) since 1994. Household size has stabilized after declining in the 1970s and 1980s, and is now estimated at 2.39 persons per household. A slight decline in household size is anticipated in coming years, to about 2.30 in 2022.)~~

In 2007, with more than 1,860,000 people, King County is the largest county in Washington State and the 14th largest in the nation. As a populous large county with a major central city, King County constitutes the majority of the "Seattle-Bellevue-Everett" metropolitan area of more than 2.5 million persons. King County exhibits growing diversity: 70% of the population is non-Hispanic white, 14% Asian or Pacific Islander, 5.6% African-American, 1% Native American and 6.8% Latino (2005 census data).

King County's population has grown by a quarter-million residents, or 16% since 1994, a modest rate compared with Sunbelt metro areas and nearby Puget Sound counties. However, given the large population already here, the growth numbers are significant. The population increase since 1994 equals

the total existing population of the cities of Bellevue, Renton and Shoreline together. King County is forecasted to grow by an additional 188,000 persons (10%) to about 2,049,000 by 2022.

The number of housing units in King County is growing at about the same rate as its population. Now estimated at 800,000 houses, apartment and condominium units and mobile homes, housing has increased by 108,000 units (16%) since 1994. Household size has stabilized after declining in the 1970s and 1980s, and is now estimated at 2.39 persons per household. A slight decline in household size is anticipated in coming years, to about 2.30 in 2022.

King County Economy

More than 1.1 million workers are employed within the borders of King County, at nearly 84,000 business establishments. With more than 40% of Washington state's jobs and payroll, the county is truly the economic engine of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. With a 2002 payroll exceeding \$52 billion, the King County economy is larger than that of several U.S. states.

King County has a cyclical economy, with booms and recessions typically on a ten-year cycle. During the 1990s, the number of jobs grew by 26% to almost 1.2 million, then edged downward after 2001. Manufacturing employment remains important, but aerospace, the largest sector, has lost 12,000 jobs since 2001. The economy has diversified from the traditional aerospace and resource bases to high tech, services and trade, both local and international. Unemployment has recently increased after several years of historic lows. However, long-term prospects are favorable for a return to healthy economic growth and further increases in jobs.

B. Planning in King County

King County's comprehensive land use planning dates back to 1964. Its first comprehensive plan under the State Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1994. The GMA, passed by the Washington State Legislature in 1990, seeks to further protect the quality of life in the Pacific Northwest. The GMA directs the state's most populous and fastest growing counties and their cities to prepare comprehensive land use plans that anticipate growth for a 20-year horizon. Comprehensive plans adopted in accordance with GMA must manage growth so that development is directed to designated urban areas and away from rural areas. The GMA also requires jurisdictions to designate and protect critical areas and commercially significant forestry, agriculture, and mining areas. The GMA requires each comprehensive plan to adhere to a set of thirteen goals and to include the following elements: land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, rural, and transportation. The King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 represented the first major review and the first set of substantive changes since the county's current comprehensive plan was initially adopted in 1994. The 2004 update is the second major review. The 2004 update also satisfies a state requirement that the county's urban growth area be reviewed every ten years.

The King County Comprehensive Plan provides a legal framework for both regional growth management direction and making decisions about land use in unincorporated King County. Public and private agencies, property owners, developers, community groups and King County staff use the comprehensive plan in several ways.

First, the plan is the framework for other plans and regulations such as subarea plans and the King County Code that govern the location and density of land uses. It provides guidance to county officials for decisions on proposals such as zoning changes and developments. It also gives the public direction on the county's position on proposed changes in land use or zoning, environmental regulations, or broader policy issues. The plan also provides a basis for decisions about public spending on facilities and services. And, the plan presents other agencies, such as cities and special purpose districts, with King County's position on large-scale matters such as annexation, use of resource lands, environmental protection and others.

The GMA allows local comprehensive plan amendments to be considered once each year. In King County, those annual amendments allow technical changes only, except for once every four years. Then, during the "Four-Year Cycle review process," substantive changes to policies, land use designations and the Urban Growth Area boundary can be proposed and adopted.

The King Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) set the framework for the county's and cities' comprehensive plans. The CPPs, adopted by the county and cities in 1992 and amended several times since 1992, establish an Urban Growth Area (UGA) within the western one-third of King County where most growth and development is targeted. The goals of the policies include: reducing urban sprawl, protecting rural areas, providing affordable housing throughout the county and coordinating protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

Another piece of the planning puzzle in King County is the multi-county planning policies (MPPs), which the GMA requires of the largest counties with adjacent urban areas. The Puget Sound Regional Council has developed the MPPs through extensive collaboration with four counties in the central Puget Sound region: Snohomish, King, Pierce and Kitsap counties. Vision 2040 is an integrated strategy that takes on regional issues that cannot be comprehensively addressed within a single jurisdiction. The Vision 2040 document outlines the regional growth strategy and specifies policies to help us achieve the strategy. The MPPs provide guidance and direction to regional, county, and local governments on such topics as setting priorities for transportation investment, stimulating economic development, planning for open space, making city and town centers more suitable for transit and walking, and improving transportation safety and mobility.

C. New and Emerging Issues: Toward a Sustainable King County

Background – Smart Growth in King County

"We should not only use the brains we have, but all that we can borrow." Woodrow Wilson

Smart Growth, in King County, started out as a single initiative in 1997, but since then we've moved beyond just one initiative – the quality of life and smart growth principles are now embedded in everything we do in King County. It is about breaking down silos between departments and policies and integrating land use, transportation, public health, environmental management and economic development in how we do business. This is an ongoing program that is flexible and searches out new opportunities and challenges. Consequently, Smart Growth in King County is dynamic and not focused on a single endpoint.

Smart Growth means working together – citizens, the business community, environmentalists, health professionals – to improve the quality of life for all residents. It means not sacrificing the environment for jobs; it means promoting health and mobility; and it means supporting local farms and vibrant urban cores.

Our goal is to create healthy, livable, movable, economically prosperous and climate-friendly communities for the citizens and business that reside in King County and to integrate this thinking into all that we do. We are implementing projects and programs that carry out the Smart Growth principles included in this plan.

The Comprehensive Plan has used the Smart Growth principles of creating walk able neighborhoods, preserving open space and farmland, directing development toward existing communities and providing a variety of transportation choices as the driving principles that determine the distribution of funding, creation of programs and projects, and for how the county interacts with local, state and federal agencies.

The impact of implementing the Smart Growth policies has been to improve air quality through the reduction of green house gas emissions (King County operates the largest hybrid transit fleet in the nation and is using 20% biodiesel in its bus fleet), reduce fuel consumption, create higher urban densities by directing 96% of the growth into the urban cores of the region (Urban Growth Area), preservation of

irreplaceable resource lands, park and critical areas, improving mobility by making transit service more accessible and sustaining a vibrant economy

Smart Growth in King County is about a multitude of programs and initiatives coalescing to change how we build and grow into the future. The following topics are being introduced into the Comprehensive Plan as new issues or expansions of existing issues. These topics – climate change, HealthScape, social equity, food policy and planning, the environment, and measurement and monitoring – represent our commitment to constantly evolve our growth management strategy to take advantage of new ideas and to form new partnerships. We have learned that tackling problems as they arise will yield fragmented results. We must join our efforts together to accomplish lasting change and establish a sustainable King County.

There are seven framework policies, one following each subsection below, that form the foundation for more detailed policies in the topical chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

FW-101 **King County will be a leader in creating sustainable communities by comprehensively considering land use, transportation, public health, the natural environment, food systems and equity.**

Climate Change

“Global warming is a ‘modern’ problem – complicated, involving the entire world, tangled up with difficult issues such as poverty, economic development, and population growth. Dealing with it will not be easy. Ignoring it will be worse.” UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

There is consensus among the world’s leading scientists that global warming caused by human emission of heat-trapping, greenhouse gases is among the most significant problems facing the world today. Climate scientists at the University of Washington predict average temperatures in the northwest will increase approximately one degree Fahrenheit per decade in the twenty-first century. Climate change in the northwest is expected to result in reduced snowpack and associated drinking water supplies, changes in winter flooding patterns, reduced summer stream flows for fish, altered habitat for other wildlife, increases in infectious diseases for humans and wildlife. King County is uniquely positioned among local governments to be a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. Using four levers of change - land use planning, transportation, environmental management and renewable energy – King County government has become a successful living laboratory and national model of strategies to reduce and prepare for global warming impacts.

King County is working locally, regionally, and nationally to reduce fossil fuel consumption and to survive the inevitable changes climate change will bring. At the local and regional levels, King County is building a green fleet of hybrid buses and cars, enacting major energy and resource conservation management programs, and requiring consideration of the impact of development proposals on greenhouse gas emissions using the State Environmental Policy Act.

At the national level, King County is forming Urban Leaders, a small coalition of large cities and counties to influence how infrastructure projects, such as floodplain management and water reuse, are funded at the federal level. In partnership with the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington, King County is writing a guidebook for regional governments on how to adapt to climate change impacts. King County has joined several large counterparts across the country in partnering with the Sierra Club to form the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Initiative, a major new strategy to combat global warming. In 2006, King County joined the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), one of the first local governments and the only transit agency do so. The CCX is a voluntary market in which members commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and work actively with other government members to advocate for a United States federal cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

While greenhouse gas emissions produced within the King County region constitute only a small percentage of national and global quantities, our region can play a critical role in pioneering the policies, practices and investments that inform climate change mitigation efforts worldwide.

FW-102 King County will reduce carbon emissions by 80 percent over 2000 levels by 2050 while simultaneously preparing the county for the impacts of global climate change by employing adaptation strategies.

HealthScape

“Good planning can avoid some of the worst modern traffic jams, put public transit first, make walking and biking convenient, and preserve pockets of “green” critical to humans’ physical and emotional health.”
Neal Peirce

King County’s groundbreaking *Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality and Health Study* (now known as HealthScape) - the first study of its kind for a local government - shows that low density, separated land uses, and poor street connectivity is associated with reduced transit ridership, walking and physical activity, increased auto use, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy consumption, and increased obesity which increases the likelihood of cardio vascular disease, type II diabetes, and colorectal cancer. HealthScape literally draws the link between sprawl, poor health, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Using data generated in King County, this study specifically concluded the following

- People walk more in neighborhoods with a wide variety of retail services and easy access to those services. This improve health and reduces pollutants
- Transit use is highest where walking is most prevalent, and walking is most prevalent where transit is convenient and efficient.
- Residents of more walkable areas are less likely to be overweight or obese and more likely to report being physically active.
- Residents in the most interconnected parts of the county drive 25% fewer miles than those who live in the most sprawling areas of the county.

Land use patterns and transportation investments can play key roles in making communities healthier. Well-planned neighborhoods have features like connected street networks, nearby shopping, walking paths, and transit service. These amenities reduce dependency on cars, increase opportunities to be physically active, decrease the likelihood to be overweight, and improve air quality.

With obesity rates rising at alarming rates, King County is using the findings from this study to update policies and plans to incorporate the health and air quality into land use and transportation planning. Additionally, the county is developing that will help jurisdiction in King County predict the health and environmental benefits of new development and transportation investments.

FW-103 King County will incorporate public health and air quality considerations into transportation and land use actions to ensure that the built environment can support a healthy populace into the future.

Health Equity

“Rather than rescuing drowning babies from the river one-by-one, we must begin to look upstream to see who’s throwing the babies in the water. We must join in a united effort to address the problem at its source.” *David Korten*

The work that King County has done with HealthScape and Climate Change are two examples of an overall and comprehensive strategy that could be employed to reduce/eliminate poverty and

discrimination, improve life options and quality of life for all county residents, and direct special attention to segments of the population that have experienced disparity. This will be accomplished, in part, through the promotion of equity and social justice in county policies and procedures, a more robust engagement of community voice in decision making, and leadership in convening regional partnerships on a foundation of pro-equity factors. The goal is to start by tackling problems further upstream than is typically done. This concept involves focusing efforts on getting at the root cause of the disparities in order to have a greater overall impact.

FW-104 King County will identify the impact of proposed programs and policies on reducing or eliminating health disparities and achieving equity through implementation of an evaluation system.

Food Policy and Planning

"We ought to plan the ideal of our city with an eye to four considerations. The first, as being the most indispensable, is health."
Aristotle

Food is as essential to our health and well-being as air, water, and other public services such as roads and parks. However, when it comes to investing in systems that ensure reliable, secure, healthy, and accessible food sources, there are widening gaps and problems. For example, King County residents are experiencing either a rise in rates of obesity and overweight, or are facing chronic hunger and lack of nutritious eating options. At both ends of the spectrum, lack of access to adequate amounts of nutritious food leads to the same thing--a diminished quality of life that ends with premature death due to diet-related chronic disease.

We also know that agricultural practices vary widely with respect to factors such as soil stewardship and inputs, which in turn affect environmental quality and human health. A global economy and geopolitical events far from King County are raising questions about the degree governments are addressing food safety and security. The further away our food and food ingredients come from, the less we know about the cultivation, processing, and transportation practices that deliver these things to into our economy and onto our dinner tables. Many of these issues, though strongly interrelated, are dealt with separately through various government actions, private sector market activity, and non-profit sector causes.

Current planning activities already affect the food system and its links with communities and regions. The food system includes all the following interdependent and connected activities: 1) how food is *produced*; 2) how food is *processed*; 3) how food is *transported*; 4) how food is *distributed*; 5) the degree that *access* to nutritious food varies by neighborhood demographics; 6) how food is *stored, prepared and enjoyed*; 7) and finally, how uneaten food and food byproducts are *disposed of* or rescued for other people's use or *recycled*. Ideally the different parts of a local food system are working together in ways that benefit people, the places they live, and the environment.

King County has very mild climate that allows year-round food production and works with the other ten member counties of Puget Sound Fresh and similar organizations across Washington state, to promote local farm products through farmers markets and other retail outlets. New land use regulations support food production by allowing flexible, site-specific development strategies instead of prescribing regulatory requirements. King County is an active partner with businesses, non-profit organizations and other government agencies to combat obesity, and improve access to food through food bank facility improvements.

Our aim is to build and support a sustainable, reliable, equitable, and resilient local food system in King County. Toward this end, we will enhance the land use strategies that have already set the stage for a vibrant farming economy and reduce hunger for those with non-nutritious and inadequate food sources. Future food system enhancements should help ensure food security and safety for all communities; lower

greenhouse gas emissions ; meet the demand for farmer's market products; create more stable farm incomes; and retain more agriculture-related jobs and wealth in the local economy.

King County plays an important role in guiding and supporting system improvements that result in King County residents eating food that is increasingly locally-sourced, healthy and environmentally benign. Such food system improvements will occur through implementation of progressive and coordinated policies and programs that address agriculture, land use, health, human services, economic development, transportation and environment.

FW-105 **King County supports food systems that are ecologically sustainable and that improve the health of the county's residents.**

Puget Sound Partnership

"On the surface, Puget Sound still looks terrific; yet underneath there are alarming signals that the ecosystem is in trouble." Puget Sound Partnership Recommendations

The Puget Sound Partnership is a state agency established in 2007 to lead efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound and its diversity of life for generations to come. The partnership will create a long-term plan called the 2020 Action Agenda that will identify and prioritize actions, name those responsible, identify funding, track progress and report the results publicly. The Partnership will be best served by moving quickly to capitalize on the energy around Puget Sound recovery and to focus on action. The partnership will insure that ongoing salmon recovery efforts stay on track and continue to make important contributions to the protection and recovery of Puget Sound by advancing salmon recovery plan implementation, addressing gaps in the Chinook Recovery Plan, defining subregion boundaries, and establishing and acting on science priorities.

FW-106 **King County will continue to be a model local government for the protection and recovery of Puget Sound.**

Performance Measurement and Management

"An acre of performance is worth a whole world of promise." William Dean Howells

As part of a growing national movement at all levels of government, King County is embracing performance measurement and management. Performance measurement is measuring and reporting performance data while *performance management* is using performance information to inform management decisions. Successful organizations rely on performance management to inform leadership about how well they are reaching their goals and where improvements can be made.

King County is doing performance management for several important reasons:

- Ensure county goals are being met
- Improve county services, where necessary
- Increase transparency with the public
- Increase use of data for more informed public discussion & decision-making
- Increase accountability at all levels of government.

In support of public access, King County publishes an annual performance report entitled *King County AIMs High: Annual Indicators and Measures* to accompany the budget. Providing additional public access to performance reporting, the AIMs High website (www.kingcounty.gov/exec/aimshigh) emphasizes the relationship between community-level conditions and agency performance. The website is organized primarily by themes (such as natural resources), but the public can also access information by department.

In addition to public measurement reporting, the King County Executive initiated a performance management program called "KingStat" in 2006. KingStat is a set of regularly held, data-focused meetings between the Executive and department managers to discuss agency performance. KingStat is designed to assist department directors in managing their operations, improve decision-making at all levels, and ensure that departments stay focused on top priorities.

FW-107 King County will continue to measure broad community-level conditions and related agency performance and report these results to the public. King County will use these results to regularly assess the achievement of countywide and comprehensive plan goals.